

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



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*****For Immediate Release*****

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Close Call Could Have Been Avoided

This morning shortly after 1 a.m. a pickup truck crashed into a parked Seattle fire engine on Interstate 5 near Northgate, as its crew was trying to put out a car fire.

The 2003 Ford Explorer hit the rear and side of the 1992 Spartan fire truck which had its emergency lights on injuring a 51-year-old firefighter. The truck's driver, a 39-year-old Everett man, also was hurt. Emergency crews took them to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

The Washington State Patrol would like to take this opportunity to remind drivers of a relatively new law (effective July 24, 2005) which makes it very clear that drivers are required to now move into an adjacent lane (if available) when approaching an authorized emergency vehicle that is making use of audible and/or visual signals.

If a driver is traveling on a two lane roadway or traffic volumes do not allow you to move over they must reduce the speed of their vehicle as they pass by. If they don't, the fine in Washington for this violation is now \$101 dollars.

In Washington State alone, 20 out of the 26 Washington State Patrol officers that have been killed in the line of duty have died in some sort of traffic incident. In addition, 56 WSDOT employees, since 1950, have lost their lives to collisions within work zones, and 13 firefighters have died due to a collision in our state since 1904.

"Safety is the number one priority, and we will continue to work with our public safety partners such as the fire departments and department of transportation across the state to work emphasis patrols to remind drivers to pay attention to emergency personnel that are working in these dangerous places," explained Chief John R. Batiste. "This bill helps the safety of our officers and other emergency personnel in the state of Washington, providing them with more safety to do their jobs out on our roads," he added.

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